

NOTES AND COMMENTS

An English essayist and critic is wondering whether we love literature as much as we should and as our fathers did. In the '70s of the last century, for example, everybody was reading Carlyle, Ruskin and Emerson, Browning and Tennyson. Bookish people never met without at once drifting into a discussion of the latest book of this or that admired master. Where are the masters of to-day? Is literary talk heard in society? Is a new novel, volume of verse, or collection of essays, treated as an event?

The development of the cheap, popular "libraries" and the steady sale of the classics in handy volumes would seem to militate against undue literary pessimism. Good books are read, and read perhaps by ever-widening circles of men and women. We cannot believe that the classics are all bought "for show" or decorative effect. The testimony of well-managed public libraries is encouraging as far as it goes.

It is not considered "good form" to talk about books, to display knowledge, to carry on animated literary discussions.

There are, however, that society people less than formerly and the and toiling wage-earners more, much more. If this be true, we are sorry for the society people, but not for society at large. There is no joy at all equal to that of books, of the com-^{mon} poets, artists, no-

the philosopher, of the past and present. Music and the drama are necessities of the right life, but they are expensive, as a rule. Good literature is always and in our days almost everywhere abundant and free, or cheap. To talk well, without egotism or naivete, about good books is something of an art, but to recommend good books is a pleasure and duty, and surely only a vain fool will resent the fact that you happen to have read a particular book a little sooner than he did.

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BIRMINGHAM'S INDUSTRIES.

Artificial Eyes, Police Whistles, Jew's Harps, Some of the Lines.

In Birmingham, which is one of the chief manufacturing cities of England, a number of articles are produced.

Young Folks

Helping Mother.

Lucy liked to be entertained by her mother, regardless of any work the latter might have to do.

"Tell me a story," was her usual request as soon as her breakfast was over, and I think she could have sat quietly and listened until bed-time. On this particular morning Mrs. Lewis had some important sewing to do, so before Lucy had a chance to trouble her she said:

"I wish my little girl would amuse herself to-day. I shall be very busy and will have to give all my attention to my work. Do you think you can?"

"Oh, yes," lisped the child, only two and a half years old. "I will help oo."

"Very well," and Mrs. Lewis smiled as she threaded a coarse needle with a long white thread and placed it in a rag for her little daughter to sew on.

"Dear little soul. She imagines she really can help me. I am ready, Lucy," she called, and settled down to her sewing.

Very soon she became so much interested in her work that she forgot all else, and sat sewing quite unconscious of Lucy and broken by a tiny voice from the n-

o to be kiet
Now I woor muzzer sing!" and to the thumping of the baby fingers on a toy piano, Lucy sang her dollies a sweet lullaby. When the song was finished, she applauded herself and thanked the "fambily," for being so well behaved.

"She has evidently forgotten all about helping me," she thought, "but I shall not disturb her while she is playing so nicely."

She peeped through the half-open door, and saw seven dollies of odd sizes and conditions leaning against the wall, while Lucy sat in her rocking chair in front of them looking most serious. She raised her forefinger, and said, in quite an awe-inspiring tone:

"Now, chillun, oo must be good to-day. Oor granny is busy and must not be turbed. What shall we do now?" And then as in answer to a suggestion from dollie Elsie, she said: "Dat's a good idea, Elsie; I will read oo my Muzzer Goose book." And then began such a jumbling of words and rhymes that it was all Mrs. Lewis could do to refrain from laughing aloud.

It is difficult to say just how long this reading would have continued, had not Miss Chinaman Dolly taken a tumble, and so caused the book to fall.

FRANCIS CHARLES T. O'HARA.

Canada's Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce.

The head of the consular service of Canada is Francis Charles French O'Hara. That is not what he is usually called, either officially or colloquially, but that after all is his chief function. Possibly one reason why we do not give him that name is that we are too modest to speak of our commercial agents as consuls. In certain important legal senses of the word these representatives of Canada in foreign lands do not stand on the same footing as the consuls of Great Britain or of any other independent State. But, in a very large sense,

that is what they really are. There are some twenty-six of these officers, and they represent the merchants and farmers and manufacturers of Canada in widely sundered parts of the earth. They are officers of the Department of Trade and Commerce; and the Deputy Minister of that department is Mr. O'Hara.

Though the most outstanding, this headship of the consular service is after all only one of the functions of Mr. O'Hara. He also controls the branch of the Government service which numbered the people. Under the Liberal regime

the census was made by the department of Agriculture came in, he Hon. George Hon. Martin Burrell of this part of his work. There was a good deal of justification for so doing, too, because Agriculture was a heavy department and Trade and Commerce a rather light one. At the same time it is to be remembered that Mr. Foster also lightened his labors by transferring the Government Annals to the Post Office. That, however, is just by the way. What concerns us here is that Mr. O'Hara is now responsible for the smooth working of the tabulation of the people. He also supervises the payment of all bounties and steamship subsidies; administers the Grain Act, which is the backbone of Western life; and as a side-line runs a general statistical bureau which keeps "tab" on the progress of Canada in trade and commerce, currency and banking, insurance and loan companies, railways and shipping.

Quiet and Debonair.

The man who does this is one of the quietest and most debonair men in the capital. Meet him in a draw-

its chief contribution to literature being "Snap Shots from Boy Life."

His marriage is a striking example of how the social life of the capital disregards political lines. For while he was private secretary to one of the most aggressive political fighters in our history, he found at his life-mate the daughter of Harry Corby, one of the staunchest supporters of the opposite party. So love laughs at politics as well as at locksmiths.—Francis A. Carman in Star Weekly.

Doings In Europe.

Germany Warned of French Peril.

Prince Bernhard von Bulow, formerly German imperial chancellor, the other day abandoned the silence which he once declared he would maintain until death. He does this in order to warn his countrymen, he says, that inveterate hostility to Germany is the soul of French policy. This, he declares, will continue to be so long as Frenchmen have the slightest hope of regaining Alsace-Lorraine by their own efforts or with outside assistance.

Prince von Bulow expresses this conviction in a review of German politics. He points out the folly of ignoring this inbred hostility of the French and of trying to arrange German relations with France on any other basis.

"It is idle to hope for a reconciliation with France," he says, "without securing the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. The French determination to attack Germany whenever there is a prospect of success must continue to be a factor in the calculations of statesmen. Germany should

endeavor to maintain courteous and correct relations with France, with whom she can co-operate in minor questions, yet she should not chase fantasies nor aspire to overcome France's ingrained rancor by compliments."

Prince von Bulow does not criticize the French, declaring that he fully comprehends their attitude. On the other hand, he criticizes indirectly the emperor's occasional bidding out of the olive branch.

Legion of Honor Loses Value.

Members of the French Legion of Honor are so numerous in France that the once highly prized little strip of red ribbon has almost ceased to be a mark of particular distinction. During recent years a number of prominent Frenchmen have even

said, "saying that they preferred not

one which had become so common. Al-

most all the other French orders have

which appears to have kept its place and

ferred on employees who have worked for

the same firm for thirty years or more.

Pope Pius a Teetotaler.

Pius X. has introduced some rather drastic reforms in the Vatican, notably in dispensing the world-famed cellars of priceless vintages, the presents of kings and emperors. It is well known that the Pope is a man of great austerity of life, and although wine to an Italian is as innocent and natural a beverage as water, he is

himself a teetotaler, and wishes to encourage the practice of water drinking.

The immediate cause of this move of

Pius X. is some of the members of the Papal court point, for Italians are very

severely of excessive drinking.

Habits For Three Cents a Day.

An attractive scheme for the betterment

of French working classes has just

been proposed by M. Cheron, Minister of

Finance. It is not intended to be compul-

sory.

By setting apart three cents a day for himself the owner

will have the satisfaction of

noting that your chest measure-

ment has increased, and you will be

conscious of greater vigor. You will

most likely find that you are not

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